

Transfer Activity in Oregon Postsecondary Education, 1996-97 to 2000-01

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Executive Summary

This report provides a follow-up to the November 2000 study “Students Who Transfer Between Oregon Community Colleges and Oregon University System Institutions: What the Data Say” (Oregon University System, 2000).

Specifically, this study:

1. summarizes the results of the last five years (95-96/96-97 to 99-00/00-01) of data-matching efforts by the Oregon University System and the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development,
2. responds to the “What the Data Say” recommendations of 2000, and
3. discusses the implications of these data for policymakers as well as institutional practitioners.

Findings

What is “transfer activity” and how many Oregon students are involved each year?

Transfer activity is defined as the total number of students who were enrolled for credit in an Oregon community college one year (at any campus at any level of activity) and then enrolled at an Oregon University System campus the next (at any campus, any status, at any level of activity). Admitted transfer students, on the other hand, are those undergraduate students who apply to an Oregon University System campus, are accepted on the basis of an evaluation of academic work completed at a community college, and, eventually, matriculate.

Transfer activity has increased from 10,058 students during the 1996-97 academic year to 14,321 students during 2000-01, an increase of 42.4%. For the same period, the total number of *admitted* transfers to OUS from Oregon community colleges has increased from 3,096 students to 3,523 students. This represents an increase of 13.8%. (See Table 1.)

How does student transfer in Oregon compare to Washington and California?

The only data available from these states for comparison purposes are those for admitted transfer students (see Appendix 2). Comparing 1996-97 data to 2000-01 data, the percentage changes in admitted community college transfer students are as follows:

- Washington state 4-year publics: -10.4%
- California State University system: -0.9%
- University of California system: +3.2%

What are the demographics of Oregon's transfer-activity students?

Data presented in this study demonstrate that, for Oregon transfer-activity students,

- the majority are female, ranging from 52.6% to 55.8% during the five years of this study; Table 3);
- an overwhelming percentage (of admitted undergraduate transfers) are residents for tuition purposes (ranging from 94.2% to 95.8% during the five years of this study; Table 3); and
- the racial/ethnic distribution of transfer activity students closely approximates the distribution for all OUS students (Table 4).

How do the transfer rates compare in Oregon for students who have first earned an associate's degree?

The percentage of AA/OT students who enroll in OUS the year following graduation has remained consistently over 50%, although during the five years of this study the percentage has declined slightly from 55.4% to 52.8% (see Table 6). The percentage of AA/OT recipients who eventually enroll in OUS shows a pronounced increase when examining a particular AA/OT cohort's appearance over time. After five years, fully 64.1% of the 95-96 AA/OT cohort had eventually enrolled in an OUS institution (see Table 8).

The percentage of AS degree holders moving on to the university the year after graduation ranges from 42.1% - 52.4% over the five year time period of this study. For AGS recipients, the range is 17.6% - 23.8%. And for AAS recipients, the range is 5.1% - 6.6%. (See Table 7.) Unlike the slight percentage decline over time for AA/OT holders, the percentages of AS and AAS recipients enrolling in OUS the following year actually has increased (Appendix 12). The percentages for AGS recipients exhibited no discernible trend up or down. And, like the AA/OT degree holders, recipients of other associate's degrees continued to appear for the first time on OUS campuses several years after completing their

degree. After five years, 56.2% of all AS holders (from 995-96) had enrolled in OUS (compared to 47.7% after the first year). For AAS recipients, the percentage after five years was 9.9% (5.2% after the first year) and for AGS recipients, 32.8% (23.8% after the first year). (See Table 8.)

What are the academic majors of community college students who transfer to an Oregon University System institution?

The top ten majors (see Table 9) chosen by 1999-00 associate-degree-receiving students once they enroll at an OUS campus are: business management/administrative services (22.0%); social sciences and history (12.7%); education (8.2%); psychology (8.0%); liberal arts & sciences/humanities (5.1%); English language and literature (4.5%); computer and information science (3.8%); biology and life sciences (3.5%); visual and performing arts (3.1%); and multi/interdisciplinary studies (3.0%) (Table 9). The three most popular areas for bachelor's degrees awarded by OUS during 1999-00 were social sciences (23.5%); humanities/fine arts (16.7%); and business (14.9%).

How do transfer students fare academically after arriving at an Oregon University System campus?

The performance of transfer-activity students compares favorably to native OUS students. Transfer-activity students have, in all OUS courses, an average GPA in the 2.90 to 2.96 range during the time frame of this study. For first-time freshmen the GPA in all courses ranges from 2.77 to 2.82; for other transfer students (transfer students whose last institution was not an Oregon community college), the range is from 2.94 to 3.06; and for all other continuing OUS students, the range is 2.97 to 3.02.

In addition to the overall performance of transfer-activity students, this study outlines transfer-activity students' GPAs in a variety of disciplinary areas and compares their performance to first-time freshmen and other transfer students. In virtually every instance, the academic performance of transfer-activity students is slightly above first-time freshmen and slightly below that of other transfer students as well as continuing OUS students. This trend holds when the various areas within mathematics are examined as well.

How do graduation rates of transfer students compare to "native" Oregon University System students?

Comparing the graduation rates of native OUS students (those first-time freshmen who had persisted through one year) with community college transfer students (those transferring with 45-89 quarter hours), for three different cohorts

(see Table 16), demonstrate that transfer students had graduated 61.9% - 68.3% in six years, while OUS students graduated 65.2% - 70.6% in six years.

When graduation rates are compared by race/ethnicity (for two cohorts), white community college transfer students graduate in the 70.1% - 73.6% range in six years, and Asian/Pacific American transfer students graduate in the 73.0% - 73.45 in six years. Other students of color graduate at lower rates. (See Table 15.)

What is the latest information regarding students who are simultaneously enrolled in an Oregon community college and an Oregon University System institution?

The number of students in Oregon enrolled in BOTH a community college AND an Oregon University System campus (see Appendix 27), has consistently risen from Fall 1995 to Spring 2000 (summers excluded). During Fall 1995, 910 students were simultaneously enrolled and for Spring 2000, 1,428 were simultaneously enrolled. That represents a 57% increase, over five years, in students enrolled in campuses from both sectors at the same time.

During that five year period, those simultaneously-enrolled students, on average, have taken about seven to eight credits at their OUS campus and about five credits at the community college campus.